

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL

November 2, 2015

Mel L. Cohen, Mayor

Sally W. Sandy, City Manager
Louis E. Vinay, Jr., City Attorney

John H. Cantrell)
Forrest A. Fleming) Councilmen
Sidney Simmons)
Ronnie Thompson)

Becky Brinkley, Interpreter

I. The meeting was called to order in the Council Chamber at City Hall at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Cohen.

II. Public Comment – The Mayor stated the guidelines for public comment.

There were no speakers; the Mayor recessed the meeting at 5:31 p.m.

III. Business of the Council – The Mayor reconvened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

IV. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag – Councilman Fleming led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

V. Invocation – The invocation was given by the Rev. Marshall Jolly, Grace Episcopal Church.

Prior to introducing the Council, the Mayor introduced Amanda Higgins, new city reporter with the News Herald.

VI. Introduction of Council – The Mayor introduced the Council and staff.

VII. Presentation of Service Pins – The Personnel Committee and City staff have decided to recognize long-term employees for years of service at a Council meeting. The Mayor reported service pins are to be presented the following employees:

- Randy Loop, CoMPAS, Chief Technician, 20 years. Due to a CoMPAS technical issue Randy was unable to attend the meeting. His supervisor will present his pin at a later time.
- Lamina Duckworth, Finance, Customer Service Manager, 25 years. The Mayor presented the pin to Lamina who then shared words of appreciation.

VIII. Public Advocacy Issues and Strategies

The Mayor first announced that the City has been awarded a \$150,000 grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust to help improve the Martin Luther King, Jr. Park.

a. The Mayor announced the following upcoming events: at CoMMA - All Hands on Deck and Country Royalty; First Frost Art Sale; Holiday Farmers' Market; Memorial Tree Lighting / Winter Carnival Saturday; and the Downtown Christmas Parade.

b. The Mayor presented a Certificate of Commendation to Lynn Webb for his faithful stewardship of Quaker Meadows Cemetery for the past 10 years.

Upon motion by Mayor Cohen, seconded by Councilman Fleming, and carried unanimously, the Council awarded a Letter of Commendation to Lynn Webb.

Webb thanked the Mayor, Council, and City Manager for the honor and privilege of accepting this commendation. He stated he wanted no recognition for his service and was most humbled by this. Webb spoke about the history of those who are buried in the cemetery; many of our forefathers who became leaders in the community. He stated he has learned a lot about our local history and feels this is the least he can do to show honor and respect for their service.

Joan Malloch, president of the Historic Burke Foundation Board of Trustees, thanked the Council for acknowledging Lynn's service and stated the Board was pleased that the citizens of Morganton and Burke County would be aware of his work at the cemetery.

IX. North Carolina Municipal Power Agency Number 1 Update – The City Manager stated there would be elections later this month for the Board of Directors. Two seats are up for election, a weighted vote seat and a majority vote seat. There is one weighted-vote seat nominee, while Cherryville, Monroe, and Lincolnton have nominees for the majority vote seat.

X. Consent Agenda – The City Manager presented the consent agenda and asked if any items should be removed from the Consent Agenda. No request was made.

Upon motion by Councilman Thompson, seconded by Councilman Simmons, and unanimously carried, the consent agenda was approved and each individual item adopted as stated, these being as follows:

A. Approved Minutes for a Special Workshop Meeting and a Regular Meeting both held on October 5, 2015.

B. Approved tax releases in the amount of \$667.19.

C. Approved a budget amendment Ord. #15-50 in the amount of \$1,441 to appropriate funds from an insurance claim and to appropriate funds for the repairs to a Public Safety vehicle.

D. Adopted Resolution #15-41 declaring as surplus two (2) air compressors at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, conditionally accept the offer of bid to purchase them for \$40,000, and publicly advertise for upset bids in accordance with G.S. 160A-269.

E. Adopted Resolution #15-40 declaring as surplus property various electric transformers, and authorized the sale of such transformers by the private sale at negotiated price method.

F. Approved and authorized a proposal for engineering services from McGill Associates to complete a hydraulic model and study for the Bost Road/Lost Corners Road vicinity in the amount of \$41,300.

XI. Items Removed from Consent Agenda – There were no items removed from the agenda.

XII. New Business

A. Public Hearings and Actions

1. Consideration of a Request Submitted by Connor Investments, LLC to Permanently Close and Abandon a Portion of Steakhouse Road, also Identified as Randall Street or S.R. 1816.

The Mayor opened the public hearing at 6:11 p.m.

The City Manager stated that Connor Investments, LLC, owner of Sagebrush restaurant, petitioned the City to permanently close and abandon a portion of Steakhouse Road/Randall Street. This request came as a result of the NCDOT South Sterling Street/Exit 105 Improvement Project and plans for a new private driveway into the Sagebrush from Sterling Street. The roadway has been removed and eliminated but the right-of-way still exists. Connor Investments has acquired the properties along both sides of the previous street. For this reason, they have requested the City to permanently abandon the right-of-way as authorized under NCGS 160A-299.

Upon review and consideration, the City staff has recommended approval of this request subject to reservation of easements for all existing utilities within the current right-of-way for maintenance and replacement.

City Council duly adopted a resolution at its September 14, 2015 meeting, stating the intent to close this portion of street, and calling for a public hearing at the November 2, 2015 meeting.

Notice of the required public hearing on this matter was duly published in the News-Herald on September 27 and October 4, 11 and 18, 2015.

There being no public comment, the Mayor closed the public hearing at 6:12 p.m.

Upon motion by Councilman Simmons, seconded by Councilman Cantrell, and carried unanimously, the Council adopted Resolution #15-42, pursuant to N.C.G.S. 160A-299, permanently closing that portion of Steakhouse Road/Randall Street as shown on the attached map, retaining the existing utility easements within such street, and abandoning the right-of-way of such section of street in accordance with the statute.

B. Other Business

1. Consideration of Insurance Providers for 2016

The City Manager stated that Council passed a resolution expressing its desire to participate in the State Health Plan (SHP) on August 3, 2015 and there have been additional discussions during committee meetings since then that have reaffirmed the commitment to joining the SHP. Staff has continued to provide all requested information and meet administrative requirements necessary to join effective January 1, 2016.

This would move the City from being self-insured for health and dental benefits to being fully insured for our health, dental, and vision coverages. Due to this change, the City will be contracting with new providers for these benefits. Staff is requesting Council's approval to enter into service agreements with the providers listed below for the related insurance coverages:

Health Insurance: The City received the Memorandum of Understanding from the State Health Plan. It is identical to the draft provided in October with the clarification that "employees will have 30 days to enroll from the date they are set up in the enrollment system to enroll in health coverage." The rates have been finalized for the SHP and are in line with previous estimates, so the earlier forecasted savings are still valid. Per previous Council instruction, the City signed the MOU and returned it to the SHP to expedite the process.

Dental and Vision Insurance: The City instructed its broker to solicit bids for dental and vision insurance. Quotes were evaluated on comparable coverage to the City's current plan, acceptance by major providers in the area, and price. Based on the quotes received and the reference checks conducted, staff recommended contracting with AlwaysCare for dental insurance and Eyemed for vision insurance. Both of these companies are used by several other local governments and provide coverage to the most popular providers in the area. The providers have agreed to the rates quoted for multiple years, however the City is not locked in to a fixed term contract.

Councilman Thompson asked if benefits could be bundled rather than using different providers. The City Manager stated that whether self-insured or fully insured, the staff

has never been able to find a good deal to bundle dental and vision. These two providers gave very good rates and local providers accept these plans.

Upon motion by Councilman Cantrell, seconded by Mayor Cohen, and carried unanimously, the Council approved ratifying the Memorandum of Understanding regarding joining the State Health Plan, and authorizing staff to complete all necessary administrative details regarding service agreements with AlwaysCare and Eyemed for dental and vision insurance respectively.

2. Consideration to Accept and Maintain a New Extension of Bush Drive and Establish a New Stop Sign

The City Manager stated the City has been requested to accept and maintain approximately 523 feet of commercial roadway extension along Bush Drive extending from the end of current maintenance to a new cul-de-sac adjacent to the Carolinas Healthcare Blue Ridge Campus. This new section of roadway was developed by Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, Inc. and Hunting Creek Associates. The developers and landowners have dedicated appropriate public right-of-way in accordance with the City's Subdivision Regulations as per recorded plat in Book 44 Page 144 of the Burke Registry. The City Development & Design Department has inspected the installation of this roadway extension and find that it has been installed in accordance with all current City of Morganton Commercial Roadway Design Standards. The staff also reports that all appropriate regulatory signage and pavement markings have been installed in accordance with currently adopted Engineering Best Practices.

The City staff recommends accepting 523 feet of commercial roadway extension along Bush Drive for permanent maintenance and this section of roadway be added into the City of Morganton Street System.

Councilman Cantrell asked for clarification of where this section of road is located. Lee Anderson clarified the location for the Council.

Councilman Fleming asked if the City does not accept this into the City streets program who would maintain the road. The City Manager stated that as far as she knew no one would do anything with it. She stated that the adjoining property owners built the road to City standards so the City could ultimately take it over. The City Attorney stated there was a parcel of land on the left of the street which would also be accessed by this portion of road.

Upon motion by Councilman Thompson, seconded by Councilman Fleming, and carried unanimously, the Council accepted the dedication of approximately 523 feet of commercial roadway extension along Bush Drive and that this section of new roadway be added into the City of Morganton Street System for permanent maintenance.

Upon motion by Councilman Fleming, seconded by Councilman Simmons, and carried unanimously, the Council adopted Ordinance #15-51 establishing a Stop Sign at the intersection of Everett Chevrolet Drive and Bush Drive.

Councilman Thompson spoke about the fact that people were turning the wrong direction into oncoming traffic when leaving the McDonald's parking lot heading to the interstate. The City Manager stated NCDOT has placed appropriate signage in the median.

3. Consideration of Appointments to the Human Relations Commission

The City Manager stated that each fall the Morganton Human Relations Commission requests appointments of student representatives from Patton and Freedom High Schools. The HRC recommends appointing Katie Logan and Hannah Seagle to serve as student representatives for the 2015-2016 school year.

Wayne Giese recently resigned as a member of the HRC. Karina Li served as a high school student representative and is now in college. She has expressed interest in continuing as a member of the HRC and is recommended to fulfill the vacated term of Mr. Giese which expires on May 3, 2015. These are Mayoral appointments.

Katie Logan	Hannah Seagle	Karina Li
Freedom High School	Patton High School	2566 Genes Loop
101 Inglewood Drive	101 Woodland Drive	Morganton, NC 28655
Morganton, NC 28655	Morganton, NC 28655	

The Mayor appointed Katie Logan and Hannah Seagle as student representatives on the Human Relations Commission for the school year 2015-2016.

The Mayor appointed Karina Li to fulfill a vacancy on the Human Relations Commission for a term ending May 3, 2016.

XIII. Other Items from City Manager and City Council Not on Agenda – There were no other items presented.

XIV. Reports – Reports were distributed for information.

XV. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

Preparation of Minutes. These minutes were prepared by Mikela D. Russell, Assistant City Clerk. Copies of all resolutions, ordinances and orders referenced in these minutes are intended to be incorporated into these minutes as if fully set forth herein. Prior to including them into the official minute book, the minutes have been read and approved

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by the City Manager and the City Attorney, then distributed to each member of the City Council for further review and final approval, at a subsequent Council Meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "M. J. [unclear]", written over a horizontal line.

Mayor

Assistant City Clerk